



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
| 10/699,020 | 10/31/2003 | Yiming Ye | SOM920030004US1 | 2131 |
| 59559 7590 02/25/2008 RYAN, MASON & LEWIS, LLP 90 FOREST AVENUE LOCUST VALLEY, NY 11560 | | | | |
| EXAMINER | | | | |
| TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE | | | | |
| ART UNIT | | PAPER NUMBER | | |
| 3623 | | | | |
| MAIL DATE | | DELIVERY MODE | | |
| 02/25/2008 | | PAPER | | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/699,020

Applicant(s)

YE ET AL.

Examiner

C. Michelle Tarae

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/11/04, 12/12/07
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a Non-Final Office Action in response to the communication received on October 31, 2003. Claims 1-20 are now pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-13 and 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Matheson (U.S. 7,184,940).

As per claim 1, Matheson discloses a method of managing at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining information associated with the at least one collaborative process (col. 2, lines 39-46; A collaboration object model captures various information related to an online meeting (i.e., collaborative process).); and

based on at least a portion of the obtained information, dynamically maintaining an information structure representative of the collaborative process so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the

collaborative process (col. 2, lines 39-46; col. 4, lines 28-32; Figure 2; The collaboration object model is an information structure.).

As per claim 2, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising the step of incorporating annotated business data into the information structure (col. 4, lines 28-52; A meeting plan object and conversation object include annotated business data as part of the collaboration object model.).

As per claim 3, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising the step of incorporating annotated design data into the information structure (Figure 3 represents an annotated design for data of the collaborative object model.).

As per claim 4, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising the step of controlling data flow associated with the at least one collaborative process based on the information structure (col. 5, lines 14-36; Figure 3 illustrates the data flow associated with a collaborative session.).

As per claim 5, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising the step of fetching one or more design data features for at least one of monitoring and tracking the at least one collaborative process (col. 6, lines 43-59).

As per claim 6, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the at least one collaborative process is a business process (col. 5, lines 14-36; A meeting is a business process.).

As per claim 7, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the at least one collaborative process is an engineering design process (col. 5, lines 37-37-65; A meeting may include a discussion on product design requirements.).

As per claim 8, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the information structure comprises a pyramid structure (Figures 3-5 represent relational design structures, or pyramid structures, as many of the objects have one to many relationships.).

As per claim 9, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the information structure is multi-dimensional (Figures 3-5 represent relational design structures, or multi-dimensional structures, as many of the objects have one to many relationships.).

As per claim 10, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the information structure is multi-resolution (Figures 3-5 represent relational design structures, or multi-resolution structures, as many of the objects have one to many relationships.).

As per claim 11, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the obtained information comprises annotated data (Figure 3; The meeting discussion includes conversations from the meeting, which is annotated data.).

As per claim 12, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the obtained information comprises user input (col. 6, lines 43-48; Information discussed during a collaboration meeting includes data that is captured, modified and accessed by all meeting participants.).

As per claim 13, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the step of maintaining the information structure further comprises updating one or more check points associated with the information structure (Check points are inherent to relational

object models as certain objects cannot exist before other objects. For example, in Figure 4 a design issue is encapsulated by (and cannot exist before) a design representation. Col. 6, lines 11-19).

As per claim 15, Matheson discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising the step of analyzing at least one of the obtained information and the information structure (col. 7, lines 49-59; The decision tracking object model allows decision analysis to be performed using user supplied questions, answers and product design issues.).

As per claim 16, Matheson discloses the method of claim 15, further comprising the step of generating one or more action representations based on the analyzing step (items 290 and 280 in Figure 3; Action items and commitments are generated.).

As per claim 17, Matheson discloses the method of claim 16, wherein the analyzing step is rule-based (The analyzing step is rule-based in that object-oriented relational database design requires that certain objects exist before others. Figure 3 illustrates a rule showing that Actors (i.e., meeting participants) make Commitments and Commitments ensure ActionItems.).

Claims 18-20 represent corresponding apparatus, article of manufacture and method claims to the claims already rejected above. Therefore, claims 18-20 are rejected on the same basis as claims 1-13 and 15-17 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matheson (U.S. 7,184,940), as applied above, and Hussein et al. (U.S. 7,007,235).

As per claim 14, Matheson does not expressly disclose the method of claim 1, wherein the step of maintaining the information structure further comprises calculating at least one energy level associated with the information structure. Hussein et al. discloses a behavior agent used to express a participant's frustration during an online collaboration meeting (col. 9, lines 54-67; col. 10, lines 1-14). Matheson and Hussein et al. are analogous references in that both are concerned with facilitating online collaboration meetings. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Matheson to calculate an energy level (i.e., frustration level per Applicant's specification) associated with a meeting because doing so provides all participants of the meeting with an idea of the level of approval of a potential solution, thereby enhancing the feedback process for the meeting (see Hussein et al., col. 9, lines 55-58).

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Smiga et al. (U.S. 6,029,171) discusses group collaboration;
- Smiga et al. (U.S. 6,421,678) discusses group collaboration;
- Smiga et al. (U.S. 6,622,147) discusses group collaboration;
- Notani et al. (U.S. 7,039,597) discusses managing collaboration between enterprises;
- Matheson (U.S. 6,952,660) discusses a collaboration session recording model;
- Kumar et al. (U.S. 6,697,810) discusses event monitoring and tracking;
- Allen et al. (U.S. 7,146,381) discusses a collaboration tool;
- Allen et al. (U.S. 6,026,410) discusses a collaboration tool;
- Cho et al. (U.S. 6,754,677) discusses facilitating information exchange; and
- Schaeffer et al. (U.S. 6,158,903) discusses collaboratively editing data.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is 571-272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached at 571-272-6729.

Art Unit: 3623

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/C. Michelle Tarae/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623

February 18, 2008